

HA

June 10, 1940.

ECC from WJL

My apology for the length of this reply to your letter of May 30 is, first, your request that comments should be as full as possible; and secondly, the fact that your proposal seems to me to raise problems that have not been discussed in the other comments that I have read but are nevertheless fundamental. I am afraid I have wandered considerably from the point in places and let off a certain amount of unasked for steam. Moreover, if I seem to be dogmatic here and there, that is far from my intention. It would be absurd to claim ability to predict the course of events categorically. My object has been merely to indicate the course that I consider most probable and desirable and to suggest that the general line of argument I have very incompletely developed is one that should at least not be entirely ignored. (The entry of Italy into the war after the completion of the rough draft of this note does not affect my argument in any essential.)

The problem appears to be what contribution PACIFIC AFFAIRS can make towards helping its readers in the belligerent countries to secure the justest possible peace on the most permanent possible basis at the earliest possible moment (and incidentally towards helping its readers in the neutral or non-belligerent countries to cooperate in this task).

The difficulty that immediately occurs to me is the fact that freedom of discussion scarcely exists any more in the world today. In the case of most of the belligerent countries it is already impossible for PACIFIC AFFAIRS (or any other journal) to publish a single article that is hostile to the fundamental policies and doctrines of the various Governments. Not only will this soon be the case in all the belligerent countries, but even the few remaining neutral or non-belligerent democracies, including the United States, are unlikely to preserve freedom of discussion much longer.

In view of these facts, the kinds of policy that PACIFIC AFFAIRS can advocate or point towards are strictly limited to those that do not conflict fundamentally with the policies of the Governments of the countries in which PACIFIC AFFAIRS hopes to continue to circulate. But if really effective articles are to be published with regard to the method of ending the war and the nature of the peace settlement, in the case of the belligerents they must inevitably conflict with the policy of the Governments in one or other of the contending alignments, if not with both (unless it is believed that a morally justifiable compromise is possible between rival imperialist powers or between imperialist aggressors and their victims - a view that I, for one, do not hold); and in the case of the non-belligerents (i.e. those countries that are neutral only in so far as they are not actually fighting), if my assumption of the imminent end of freedom of the press is correct, such articles will be to all intents and purposes in the same position as in the case of the belligerents since all opinion hostile to the policy of the favored belligerent side will be suppressed.

But the people you specifically mention as wanting to reach are the PACIFIC AFFAIRS readers in the belligerent Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, China, and Japan. In the case of the first six the difficulties are less obvious, though no less real, than in the case of the last two since these six countries are all fighting on the same side, which is also the side supported by the United States. As far as they are concerned,



therefore, PACIFIC AFFAIRS will have complete freedom of expression so long as it does not oppose the fundamental tenets of the present Governments of the Allies and the United States. But in the case of China and Japan, the only possible types of solution to the war in the Far East (even in its present localized state) that PACIFIC AFFAIRS could conceivably put forward would be such as the present Japanese Government could not possibly allow to be advocated in Japan (even if balanced by presentations of the Japanese solution).

(The fact that PACIFIC AFFAIRS has hitherto continued to be permitted to circulate in Japan can only mean, in my opinion, that it has taken no positive stand on the war issue, either editorially or in individual articles. I am assuming, however, that what you have in mind for PACIFIC AFFAIRS is, in fact, a more positive policy; that is, the advocacy of specific (and presumably alternative) solutions as regards the methods both of ending the war and of laying a permanent foundation for peace in the various conditions under which peace may be at first established. This is the only way, it seems to me, in which PACIFIC AFFAIRS can play a more active and effective part in the present crisis, assuming that such an active part is possible. But if I am wrong in assuming this, then, of course, this whole comment is irrelevant.)

Thus if PACIFIC AFFAIRS adopts a positive attitude (or alternative positive attitudes) towards the Sino-Japanese war, it will cease to circulate in Japan, which may or may not be important. And if it adopts a positive attitude (or alternative positive attitudes) towards the European war and its world-wide implications, and at the same time hopes to continue to circulate legally in the six countries mentioned above and in the United States, it will have to confine its solutions (either now or in the very near future) to such as will not conflict with the fundamental policies of the Governments of these countries.

The importance of this fact depends, of course, on the type of solution that PACIFIC AFFAIRS is likely to put forward. If it confines itself to the discussion of such plans as a Federal Union of capitalist states after the defeat of Hitler, the best means of holding the British Empire together in the event of the defeat of Great Britain, etc., its circulation will be unhampered, but its effectiveness as a guide to the achievement of a just and permanent peace will be slight. If, however, it gets down to fundamentals; admits the very good possibility that this war is not going to end in a German or an Allied victory but in revolution throughout Europe; suggests that this solution is the only one that will ensure permanent peace in Europe and so, eventually, throughout the world; points the way towards this solution; and bases some of its plans for world reorganization on this assumption; if it does all or any of these things, it will be banned immediately abroad and, at least before the year is out, in this country as well.

I am making this point not in order to prove, by an extreme example, that PACIFIC AFFAIRS is going to be denied freedom of expression, but because I think that of all the possible developments on which plans for reorganization may be based, revolution throughout all Europe is the most probable - and incidentally the most desirable. If this is so, PACIFIC AFFAIRS' inability to offer it as at least one of its alternative solutions and to draw up at least some of its plans for world settlement on the basis of such a development would greatly reduce, if not completely destroy, its effectiveness.

Of course, although severe restrictions on the freedom of the press already exist in the belligerent countries, I may be exaggerating the danger of similar



developments in this country. I most sincerely hope I am. But the innumerable Bills of a fascist nature now under discussion, the present temper of Congress and the Administration, and the war and "fifth column" hysteria of the press - all of which are indications of what can be expected as the European crisis grows even more acute - are facts that should at least be seriously considered, quite apart from the basic fact that America is itself rushing headlong towards entry into the war.

(I know that these restrictions are considered necessary by many liberals, who say that dissident minorities have to be suppressed during times of war or other national emergencies, and that only a dictatorship can fight effectively against a dictatorship. This is, to a strictly limited extent, true. But it does not mean that fascism can only be fought by fascism, as has been proved by the internal developments in Spain and China during their wars of national liberation. The acquiescence by a liberal in certain dictatorial measures should surely depend on the nature of the forces behind the dictatorship, of the forces suppressed, and of the ends aimed at by the dictatorship. In this connection, it is important to remember that fascism came to power in Germany on the basis of socialist slogans and to consider the possibility that fascism may come to America by the path of "anti-fascist" agitation and legislation. The very liberals who now welcome the suppression of opinion as applied to the extreme left (called "pro-fascist" or "fifth column") may very soon find their own respectable writings next on the list, unless, of course, they take the not uncommon course of jumping on the bandwagon.)

All this does not mean that I think it is hopeless for PACIFIC AFFAIRS to attempt to adopt the positive policy you suggest. It merely means that it will have to accept the fact that its effectiveness can only be limited. The problem is to make it as effective as possible within these limitations. More specifically, on the basis of my theory that revolution is the most likely and desirable development in Europe, its policy should be to do everything possible within the limitations imposed or about to be imposed upon it to assist such a development and draw up blue-prints for a new world organization on the basis of such a development.

Since the Soviet Union is going to be the most important single force in the European revolution, PACIFIC AFFAIRS' first task should be to do all it can to increase its readers' understanding of the Soviet Union, its internal structure, and particularly its foreign policy.

Secondly, it should make a very special point of clarifying the issues involved in the question of America's participation in the war. The present position, as I see it, is that, until there is a radical change in the outlook of the Administration, American participation will inevitably mean a strengthening of the forces of reaction and counter-revolution. The solution of Europe's problem lies with the people of Europe in cooperation with the Soviet Union. Unless we have absolutely convincing guarantees that the power of America would be thrown behind, and not against, these forces, American participation would be disastrous. It is difficult to be more precise than this since it is impossible to foresee exactly how things are going to develop. But in general, it seems to me that, however it may come about, the character of the present war is likely to change into a straight revolutionary struggle on a European scale, and that if America, the last stronghold of capitalism, is involved in that struggle, there can be little doubt as to which side it is going to support.

I know that many members of the IPR are of the opinion that at least three other alternative developments are just as likely, and two of them far more desirable, than the one I claim to be the most likely and desirable. The



the frantic appeals of the Allies to German capitalism to "come home" (to use Dorothy Thompson's phrase) into the class front of capitalism to save "civilization as we know it" (decadent capitalism) from the threat of "Asiatic barbarism" (socialism). The necessary expansion of German capitalism was, of course, to take place at the expense of the Soviet Union. But the most powerful elements of the German ruling class decided otherwise, perhaps because they feared the Red Army more than the Allied military machine; perhaps because they feared the effect on the German workers of a war against the Soviet Union; or perhaps because they thought it better to defeat the Allies first and then turn on the Soviet Union. But whether or not the choice that they have made is fraught with less danger to European capitalism than the alternative choice, the fact remains that the choice has been made and that presumably the Nazi leaders have not forgotten to devise means by which they hope to suppress the European revolution that will certainly result from their decision.

There seem to be only two alternatives. One is to attempt to apply to all Europe the terroristic methods applied to Czechoslovakia and Poland, that is the method of Gestapo control directed from Berlin; the other, to set up puppet Governments in Britain and France composed of British and French fascists, that is, all those who would rather be capitalists in a satellite state of the Greater German Empire than citizens of a socialist Europe. That many members of the British and French ruling class would welcome such a solution and are already thinking along these lines is certain. However, I don't think that either of these attempts to dam up the revolution is likely to succeed since the strength of the united workers of Europe will be overpowering.

But to get back to the program proposed for PACIFIC AFFAIRS. In addition to developing in its readers a thorough understanding of the Soviet Union and of the implications of America's entry into the war, which would involve thrashing out the whole question of the nature of the war, it should consider the line of action to be pursued if and when the stage is reached of a revolutionary Europe and the last stand of capitalism, and possibly of the remnants of the British Empire, on the American continent. The hysteria of the American capitalist class and the full-blooded fascism that will accompany it under these conditions will make impossible the continued publication of PACIFIC AFFAIRS, even as a mildly liberal journal. In fact, if it is to make any significant contribution towards the solution of the rapidly developing crisis, it will have to pack all it can into its next few issues, and even then its circulation will be confined to the U.S.A., China, and the Soviet Union. But it would be better to awaken a few of its readers to reality than to continue to foster the illusions of a wider public.

The ideal line of action to be advocated in the situation envisaged above should be cooperation with the European revolutionaries and the Soviet Union in their attempt to build a socialist Europe as a nucleus for a world socialist order, with the obvious corollary of the establishment of socialism in this country. A second-best policy would be refusal to intervene in any way in Europe or to play any part in the maintenance of the British Empire as such, coupled with the rendering of all possible aid to China, an embargo on Japan, and an alliance with the Soviet Union for the prevention of further Japanese aggression. (Any action with regard to the Far East (or in Europe, for that matter) that is not taken in collaboration with the Soviet Union must be considered imperialistic since there can be no other reasonable explanation of the failure to enlist Soviet cooperation.) But in the case of both these policies, the



first step would have to be the establishment of a more or less progressive Government, or at least the compulsion of a radical change in the outlook of the present Government, in the United States.

As regards the policy to be advocated on the assumption of a German victory, an Allied victory, or a stalemate and negotiated peace, and of the failure in each case of the revolution to materialize, all of which eventualities I think are unlikely, I consider valueless all proposals that envisage solutions that do not lead towards the basic solution of revolution. Thus the proposal to saddle America and the remains of the British Empire with the task of carrying on the fight against the Greater German Empire would mean a third world imperialist war on a grander scale than that of the two previous ones. Again, all proposals based on the assumption that the present Governments of Britain and France will be interested in some form of Federal Union ignore not only the avowed war aims of these Governments but also the fact that, (notwithstanding the show of "Labor" representation in Britain,) they represent imperialist powers, which are by their very nature precluded from making anything but an imperialist peace. Finally, all proposals based on the premise that a just compromise is possible between two imperialist powers as such ignore the fact that such a compromise can only be based on the continued exploitation of the peoples of those powers and on further imperialistic aggressions on an even greater scale. To quote Lenin on the two latter points: ". . . the United States of Europe as the result of an agreement between the European capitalists is possible, but what kind of agreement would that be? An agreement to suppress socialism in Europe . . ." Yet a permanent peace settlement on any other basis except socialism is impossible.

I have dealt primarily with the problem of Europe and American relations with Europe because its solution is fundamental to the solution of the world problem as a whole. Moreover, I consider that the issues I have raised apply equally, mutatis mutandis, to the Pacific Area and to South America (and particularly to Mexico in the immediate future). However, I fully realize that it is useless to advocate any progressive policy as far as this country is concerned without also agitating for a drastic change in the attitude, which must now mean a change in the composition, of the American Government. It is not only useless; it will very soon be impossible - legally.

In brief, then, I whole-heartedly agree with your suggestion that PACIFIC AFFAIRS should adopt a more positive policy with regard to the solution of the world crisis. But I feel very strongly that unless it accepts the possibility of the general line of development here outlined, encourages full discussion of the point of view here put forward, and bases at least some of its proposed solutions on ~~this~~ such a development and viewpoint, it will not be fulfilling the function that it should at least try to fulfill. Moreover, I repeat, if it is to adopt this line of approach to the problem, it must start doing so without a moment's delay.